United Nations A/63/846

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 May 2009

Original: English

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 103 (c)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 6 May 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a Declaration by the United Nations Democracy Caucus of the Community of Democracies on the election of members of the Human Rights Council, issued during the presidency of Portugal (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 103 (c).

(Signed) Jorge **Lobo de Mesquita**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 6 May 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the United Nations Democracy Caucus of the Community of Democracies on the election of members of the Human Rights Council

The members of the Community of Democracies, gathered as the United Nations Democracy Caucus, reaffirm the commitment contained in the Santiago Ministerial Communiqué (A/59/814, annex) and in the Bamako Concensus (A/62/867, annex) to support the candidacy of countries contributing effectively to the promotion and protection of democracy and human rights worldwide in bodies focused on elements of democratic governance, such as the Human Rights Council.

On the eve of the forthcoming elections for membership in the Human Rights Council, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, in which the Assembly called on all Member States to take into account the contribution of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments when electing members to the Council, we, the members of the Community of Democracies, appeal to the membership of the United Nations to favour those Member States that have demonstrated a genuine commitment to human rights, both in practice and in their pledges.

We reiterate our belief in the importance of the composition of the Human Rights Council with respect to its credibility and effectiveness as a human rights body and therefore reiterate the importance of electing to the Council only those Member States whose commitment to human rights not only can be demonstrated by their pledges and commitments but also has been demonstrated in practice.